

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Without objection, it is so ordered.

COMMITTEE ON FOREIGN RELATIONS

Mr. HARKIN. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent that the Committee on Foreign Relations be authorized to meet during the session of the Senate on Thursday, May 15, 2008, at 2 p.m. to hold a hearing on U.S.-China relations.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Without objection, it is so ordered.

COMMITTEE ON HOMELAND SECURITY AND GOVERNMENTAL AFFAIRS

Mr. HARKIN. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent that the Committee on Homeland Security and Governmental Affairs be authorized to meet during the session of the Senate on Thursday, May 15, 2008, at 10 a.m. to conduct a hearing entitled "Nuclear Terrorism: Providing Medical Care and Meeting Basic Needs in the Aftermath."

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Without objection, it is so ordered.

COMMITTEE ON INDIAN AFFAIRS

Mr. HARKIN. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent that the Committee on Indian Affairs be authorized to meet during the session of the Senate on Thursday, May 15, at 9:30 a.m. in room 562 of the Dirksen Senate Office Building to conduct a hearing.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Without objection, it is so ordered.

COMMITTEE ON THE JUDICIARY

Mr. HARKIN. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent that the Senate Committee on the Judiciary be authorized to meet during the session of the Senate, to conduct an executive business meeting on Thursday, May 15, 2008, at 10 a.m. in room SD-226 of the Dirksen Senate Office Building.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Without objection, it is so ordered.

SUBCOMMITTEE ON OVERSIGHT OF GOVERNMENT MANAGEMENT, THE FEDERAL WORKFORCE, AND THE DISTRICT OF COLUMBIA

Mr. HARKIN. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent that the Committee on Homeland Security and Governmental Affairs' Subcommittee on Oversight of Government Management, the Federal Workforce, and the District of Columbia be authorized to meet during the session of the Senate on Thursday, May 15, 2008, at 2 p.m. in order to conduct a hearing entitled, "National Security Bureaucracy for Arms Control, Counterproliferation, and Nonproliferation Part I: The Role of the Department of State."

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Without objection, it is so ordered.

PRIVILEGES OF THE FLOOR

Mr. HARKIN. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent that Jenna Jones of my staff be granted floor privileges for the duration of today's session.

The ACTING PRESIDENT pro tempore. Without objection, it is so ordered.

Mr. BAUCUS. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent that the following

staff of the Finance Committee be allowed on the Senate floor for the duration of the debate on the farm bill: Ayesha Khanna, Bridget Mallon, Scott Guenther, Bruce Fergusson, Kelsey Hamilton, Libby Cohn, Nathan Empsall, Ezana Teferra, Jeremiah Langston, and Thea Murray.

The ACTING PRESIDENT pro tempore. Without objection, it is so ordered.

Mr. CASEY. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent that Caryn Long from my staff be granted the privilege of the floor for today and throughout the remaining time on the bill.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Without objection, it is so ordered.

ENCOURAGING DISPLAY OF THE FLAG OF THE UNITED STATES ON FATHER'S DAY

Mr. DURBIN. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent that the Judiciary Committee be discharged from further consideration of H.R. 2356 and the Senate proceed to its immediate consideration.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Without objection, it is so ordered.

The clerk will report the bill by title.

The assistant legislative clerk read as follows:

A bill (H.R. 2356) to amend title 4, United States Code, to encourage the display of the flag of the United States on Father's Day.

There being no objection, the Senate proceeded to consider the bill.

Mr. DURBIN. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent that the bill be read a third time and passed, the motion to reconsider be laid upon the table, with no intervening action or debate, and any statements related to the bill be printed in the RECORD.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Without objection, it is so ordered.

The bill (H.R. 2356) was ordered to a third reading, was read the third time, and passed.

TEMPORARY EXTENSION OF PROGRAMS UNDER THE SMALL BUSINESS ACT AND THE SMALL BUSINESS INVESTMENT ACT OF 1958

Mr. DURBIN. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent that the Senate proceed to the immediate consideration of S. 3029 introduced earlier today.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The clerk will report the bill by title.

The assistant legislative clerk read as follows:

A bill (S. 3029) to provide for an additional temporary extension of programs under the Small Business Act and the Small Business Investment Act of 1958, and for other purposes.

There being no objection, the Senate proceeded to consider the bill.

Mr. KERRY. Mr. President, on May 23, 2008, many of the Small Business Administration's programs and authorities will expire.

Unfortunately, it has become commonplace for those in the small business community to face an expiration of the programs they depend upon. Since September 30, 2006, we have had to pass four temporary extensions to keep the Small Business Administration authorized. And here we are, yet again, trying to pass a temporary bill to continue these vital small business programs—this time through March 20, 2009.

Since Democrats took the majority over a year ago, the Committee on Small Business and Entrepreneurship has worked hard to create a good climate for small businesses in this country. To that end, we have had 20 hearings, 6 roundtables, and passed 5 major bills out of committee to address the needs of the small business community, needs which have gone unmet the past 7 years. During that time, we have often encountered obstruction from the administration and Republican congressional leadership. Despite the cooperation of the very supportive ranking member I have in Senator OLYMPIA SNOWE, who is cosponsoring this legislation, some on the other side have blocked our legislation and have blocked the appointment of conferees, which leaves us unable to conference with the House and get much-needed legislation signed into law. The Republicans, now in the minority, fear what will happen in a conference. Rather than work through differences and accomplish something, it is easier to block legislation. Who suffers from all this needless obstruction? Small business owners and their employees.

Just today, we saw how it is possible to get things done. S. 163, the Small Business Disaster Response and Loan Improvements Act of 2007, was included in the farm bill conference report. This legislation, which was adopted as an amendment to the farm bill, was then negotiated with the House as part of the farm bill conference, allowing us to enact meaningful reforms in the way the Small Business Administration comes to the aid of disaster victims.

My hope is that once we have this extender bill in place, the administration and the Republican leadership will realize that five temporary authorizations are five too many and allow our committee to do what it has been attempting to do, which is to do a comprehensive reauthorization of the rest of the small business programs. Therefore, I urge my colleagues to pass this temporary bill and then give us the support we need for a comprehensive reauthorization of small business programs.

Mr. DURBIN. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent that the bill be read a third time and passed, the motion to reconsider be laid upon the table, and that any statements relating to the bill be printed in the RECORD.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Without objection, it is so ordered.

The bill (S. 3029) was ordered to be engrossed for a third reading, was read the third time, and passed, as follows: